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FEMA

Recovery News

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FEMA/OES: 626-431-3178

SBA: 916-216-9915

LESS THAN THREE WEEKS REMAINING TO REGISTER WITH FEMA FOR ASSISTANCE *Christmas Holiday teleregistration hours shortened*

PASADENA, Calif. — In less than three weeks, the final day to register with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) and for disaster-related unemployment assistance through the California Employment Development Department will be here.

FEMA's Federal Coordinating Officer Mike Hall said the deadline for Southern California residents to apply for disaster assistance for damages or losses caused by wildfires is at 6 p.m. on Wednesday, January 9, 2008.

During the upcoming Christmas holiday period, the teleregistration line at **1-800-621-FEMA (3362) or TTY 1-800-462-7585** will be closed from Sunday, Dec. 23 through Tuesday, Dec. 25. During the periods of operation, it will be available from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Individuals and business owners may register anytime with FEMA for help with property losses online at www.fema.gov.

Registering with FEMA starts the application process for federal and state assistance related to property losses directly caused by wildfires in Southern California. People who have registered with the American Red Cross or other helping agencies must also register with FEMA if they want access to federal and state aid.

"This is a busy time of year but no one should be too busy to apply for unmet needs," Hall said. "I urge any residents with uninsured losses to consider registering now rather than waiting until the last few remaining days before the application period ends."

January 9, 2008, is also the final day to apply for unemployment assistance for persons out of work due to the wildfires, who are self-employed individuals or agricultural employees who do not qualify for regular unemployment insurance, and who lost their income [www.edd.ca.gov/fleclaim.htm].

Residents in seven counties – Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, Santa Barbara, San Diego and Ventura - may apply for FEMA and state recovery aid including grants for emergency disaster housing and essential repairs, individual and household grants for necessities not covered by insurance, or other sources and low-interest loans from the U. S. Small Business Administration (SBA).

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FEMA coordinates the federal government's role in preparing for, preventing, mitigating the effects of, responding to, and recovering from all domestic disasters, whether natural or man-made, including acts of terror.

The California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES) coordinates overall state-agency response to major disasters in support of local government. OES is also responsible for maintaining the State Emergency Plan and coordinating California's preparedness, mitigation and recovery efforts.

Disaster recovery assistance is available without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, disability, English proficiency or economic status. If you or someone you know has been discriminated against, you should call FEMA toll-free at 1-800-621-FEMA (3362). For TTY call 1-800-462-7585.

SBA is the federal government's primary source of money for the long-term rebuilding of disaster-damaged private property. SBA helps homeowners, renters, businesses of all sizes, and private non-profit organizations fund repairs or rebuilding efforts, and cover the cost of replacing lost or disaster-damaged personal property. These disaster loans cover uninsured and uncompensated losses and do not duplicate benefits of other agencies or organizations. For information about SBA programs, applicants may call 800-659-2955.

Temporary housing assistance from FEMA does not require that an applicant file for an SBA loan. However, an applicant must complete an SBA loan application to be eligible for additional assistance under the part of the Other Needs Assistance (ONA) program that covers personal property, vehicle repair or replacement, and moving and storage expenses. There are other ONA grants such as public transportation expenses, medical and dental expenses, and funeral and burial expenses that do not require individuals to apply for an SBA loan to be eligible. FEMA will process applications for housing assistance regardless of whether the applicant has applied for an SBA loan, and eligibility determinations for applicants requesting FEMA's temporary housing assistance will not be held up because the applicant has or has not filled out an SBA application.

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